He who trusts to his abundance of natural virtue is like an infant newly born, whom venomous reptiles will not sting. —TAO TE KING

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THE CYCLE'S TURNING

IT is customary, when a wider perspective on human affairs is sought, to speak of how a visitor from another planet might regard the events on earth. This is not so improbable a device as one might think. If, as William Q. Judge suggests in "The Synthesis of Occult Science," it may be said that "the authors of ancient wisdom have spoken from at least two whole planes of conscious experience beyond that of our every-day 'sense-perception'," and if the planets—or certain of them—represent heights above the level of development so far achieved by mankind, then the perspective afforded by H. P. Blavatsky, pre-eminently in *The Secret Doctrine,* is from a stance that may be compared to sight from the vantage-point of another planet.

Yet this vision, however utopian it may seem to minds deeply involved in the complexities of material experience, is an evolutionary possibility for every human being. And it is precisely this potentiality which makes the propositions of occult philosophy initially acceptable, for otherwise how could anyone hope to verify them for himself?

There is a sense in which the writings of H. P. Blavatsky are more than anything else a call to unlimited aspiration. At the same time, the philosophy she expounded takes into full account the various stages of growth, with accompanying struggles that must be gone through before the full promise of evolution can be realized. Her object, it seems clear, was to lay the groundwork for rational grasp

of the high purposes of spiritual evolution, such that the intuitions of inward divinity, to which she also appealed, might have a field of conscious recognition and application. These doctrines, then, may be taken as a "plank of salvation" for the entire human race, although the "salvation" is of a sort that comes step by step, increasing with every increment of self-knowledge.

The obstacles to a fair hearing of the Secret Doctrine teachings have been many. These ideas entered the stream of common human awareness a little less than a century ago, and were regarded by most of the educated men of that time as too far removed from familiar modes of thinking to be taken seriously. Again, Mr. Judge provides a useful account of the situation:

> It may be humiliating to "Modern Exact Science" and repugnant to the whole of Christendom to have to admit that the Pagans whom they have despised, and the "Heathen Scriptures" they long ridiculed or ignored, nevertheless possess a fund of wisdom never dreamed of under Western skies. They have the lesson, however, to learn, that Science by no means originated in, nor is it confined to the West, nor are superstition and ignorance confined to the East.
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> It can easily be shown that every real discovery and every important advance in modern science have already been anticipated centuries ago by the ancient science and philosophy. It is true that these ancient doctrines have been embodied in unknown languages and symbols, and recorded in books inaccessible to western minds till a very recent date. Far beyond all this inaccessibility, however, as a cause preventing these old truths from reaching modern times, has been the prejudice, the scorn and contempt of ancient learning manifested by the leaders of modern thought.
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> Nor is the lesson yet learned that bigotry and scorn are never the mark of wisdom or the harbingers of learning; for still, with comparatively few exceptions, any claims or discussion of these ancient doctrines is met with contempt and scorn. The record has, however, been at least outlined and presented to the world. As the authors of the *Secret Doctrine* have remarked these doctrines may not be largely accepted by the present generation, but during the twentieth century they will become known and appreciated.

It is now ninety years since the founding of the Theosophical Society in New York City. While not much of a "progress report" on the *open* acceptance of Theosophical teachings may be submitted as yet, there have nonetheless been massive reductions of the bar-

riers which stand in the way. We may note first the practical dissolution, in intellectual terms, of the claims and pretensions of institutional religion in the West. Religious organizations still exist, and on occasion may seem to exert an influence, but the forward movement in religion is mainly a moving into the current of thought of outspoken and courageous individuals whose religious views have more of a personal than an institutional inspiration. The doctrinal conceptions of such men seem of little significance. What characterizes them is rather an indifference to confinements of belief, and an individual, self-induced response to the moral contradictions of the times. Organizations which in the past have maintained their coherence through rigidity of belief can now no longer preserve the façade of changeless uniformity, with resulting threat to the survival of such bodies. The disintegrations to be expected—they can hardly be called "reforms"—may seem long in coming, but they may be almost sudden in historical terms. An inevitable effect of these shocks to millions of passive believers will be the removal of long trusted sources of security and the beginning of bewildered and often desperate questioning. It is under the influence of such loosening of familiar bonds of mind that far-reaching changes in the social order may take place.

Not less is the influence of theory and practice of the sciences, although here, save for the omninous possibilities of nuclear weapons, the alterations of outlook seem to have a more positive orientation. At issue in the sciences is the questioning of an over-simplified theory of knowledge and the use of the scientific method in subservience to it. The decline of religious belief has been of direct service to the progress of serious scientific inquiry, since it has removed the need for polemical attack on religious assertion. Scientists who participate in the dialogue concerning the general problems of philosophy are no longer under pressure to manufacture arguments on materialistic assumptions to counter dogmas that are now almost forgotten. Instead, they are free to admit the shortcomings of scientific theory in relation to the kind of explanations that are needed to account for the mysteries of human life, and they are no longer uniformly inhospitable to ideas that have transcendental implications.

Modern physics has become so rarefied in mathematical terms that it is almost a training-ground for metaphysical speculation. In any event, contemporary physical theory gives little support to the

mechanist doctrines which have been so demoralizing as assumptions which dominated modern psychology until very recent times. The issues in biology come to a focus in the problem of the origin of form, and here, despite the numerous empirical evidences provided of what the occult philosophy calls the astral body, the pursuit of knowledge by scientific means dissolves into admittedly unanswered questions. Interesting mergers and alliances have been taking place among various branches of sociology and psychology. Most dramatic has been the rediscovery of the crucial role of the myth in affecting the dynamics of human behavior. Discussions of human identity and of ideas of the self have reached up out of modern literature and depth psychology to give a new life to an almost moribund academic philosophy. While these various developments may perhaps obtain a measure of explanation from ostensible causes in the increase of communications between East and West, and in the hungers which arise from the disorders of the times, the student of Theosophy has little difficulty in recognizing in them substantial evidence of the awakening powers of mind—as predicted categorically for this period by H.P.B.

Undoubtedly, however, the disorders of the age have played a part in directing the currents of this awakening. The game of cosmological speculation as a leisure-time activity of generalist thinkers has been replaced by urgent wondering about the meaning of human life. The terrible events of the twentieth century have made the thoughtful humble, the ignorant frightened, and the rulers insecure. Ethics, long the captive of ideological thinking, now issues challenge after challenge to the intellectual authorities of the present, although the replies obtained are uncertain and indistinct. The world of today, instead of encountering problems it can set out to solve, is confronted by dilemmas which apparently have no solution. The word "revolution," in all its various meanings, has become the key to analysis of contemporary events. Yet the leaders of outbreaks and rebellions have little tangible hope to offer to their followers and to the discontented masses all over the world. The age seethes with unrest, while the unleashing of forces which lack constructive direction has become the typical cause of disturbing events.

Clearly to be discerned, however, is the confirmation of another prophecy by H.P.B., giving insight into the meaning of many present conflicts. Speaking of the cycle (the first five thousand years of Kali Yuga) which came to an end during the closing years of the

nineteenth century, and of what might be expected thereafter, she wrote in the Introductory to *The Secret Doctrine*: "We have not long to wait, and many of us will witness the Dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races." Increasingly, as the years go by, the white races are having to learn the folly of their presumed "superiority" over their darker-skinned brothers, and the ridiculous presumption in supposing that the mechanical skills placed at their disposal by modern science, along with the passion for acquisition and vulgar display, somehow entitle them to lay claim to having built a high civilization. Surely a sense of proportion in such matters will be one of the results of struggles now in process.

How can we frame the confusing events and torturing psychopolitical problems of the present in a way that may illumine them with a little more light than comes from saying simply that ignorance and selfishness weigh heavily on the present? If we look for a time that might be termed the Heroic Age of modern man, we should have to select the eighteenth century. This was a time of climactic struggle in behalf of the common humanity of all men. The revolutions of the United States and France, for all their spilt blood and in some instances extreme cruelty and horror, were the expression of a new vision of man in Western history. The resulting constitutions enshrined impersonal ideals of human equality, freedom, and justice for all. The great burst of energy and enterprise which followed these great declarations is evidence enough of the strength that was born from the sense of individual dignity so recognized and affirmed. Yet revolutionary politics gave but the outward shell of true human freedom. It was affirmative of rights, emancipating of religious oppression, and generous in its provision of material opportunities, but it perforce left undefined those conceptions of individual responsibility and inner moral purpose which alone can contribute the moral tone and sensibility of civilized institutions, and the religions of the West were incapable of filling these needs. The inversions of the meaning of the *Christos* principle had become too settled in human belief for any renewal of that inspiration to take place. Meanwhile, under the accelerating material progress of the nineteenth century, and the great migration to new lands that remained to be exploited by adventurous souls, the hungers of the inner life were little felt. It was a cycle of nominal religious observance and the accumulation of wealth, coupled with rapid advances

in scientific discovery and industrial progress. The moral meaning of equality, which had never been strong, was interpreted as the right of every man to triumph over his fellows in the competitive struggle. The obvious rewards of freedom were to the strong, and by the closing years of the century the Darwinian doctrines of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest had become the foundation for a philosophy of ruthless economic individualism. At the same time an angry reaction of the depressed and exploited classes was in the making in Europe. Armed with militant revolutionary social conceptions, and a dream of human solidarity based upon violent expropriation of the rich and powerful, this movement swept into power early in the twentieth century and has since spread so widely in the world, largely as a consequence of impoverishing and weakening wars, that the resulting ideological rivalry has become the all-engrossing obsession of the present. In other epochs of history, so desperate a confrontation would no doubt have been soon resolved by might of arms, but today the very power to destroy available to the great nations has reached an apex of development that makes men as desperately fearful of its use. One might even say that the possibilities of political power and the military resources of nation-states have been exhausted by this increase in nihilistic potency. It is becoming manifest that some other solution than that of naked power must be found for the problems of human beings.

It is equally clear that the ideas of freedom and equality must gain deeper content from a truly philosophical understanding of the nature of man, and that this can come about only through the gradual Theosophizing of modern thought. The means by which this may be accomplished are by no means apparent as yet. No one short of an adept could hope to penetrate the opacities of present events and to see the potentialities of human awakening behind the hysteria of fear and the hypnosis of politics. Crisis, no doubt, will follow crisis, and perhaps natural human revulsion for the follies of mutual destruction will play a part in the dawn of a new age, but surely the impulse to a constructive life will come more fruitfully from quickening human perception of what life is for and of what human beings may do for themselves and for one another, without subjecting the future to the compulsive manias of politics. It is reasonable to think that there may be many adjustments in the arrangements of the outer affairs of men—the very progress of which we have been so proud makes them inevitable—but the fundamental

changes will have to be of another order, concerned with individual self-understanding and wider envisioning of the brotherhood of man.

It is in the light of such needs that we are able to recognize the work of H. P. Blavatsky as sounding the keynote of the future age. All her efforts were directed toward these high ends. From the very beginning of her labors in New York, her ringing pronouncements were concerned with the spiritual nature, the untold potentiality, the high evolutionary destiny of Man. Even her method was prophetic of the future. She relied solely on the *power of ideas,* which is a way of saying that she relied upon the capacity of awakening human beings to respond to those ideas. She sought no pretentious institutional aids, used no "campaigns," but simply spoke and wrote of the conceptions of ancient philosophers and spiritual teachers—some well known as figures in history, others obscure or not even heard of—and systematically went about putting those teachings into an idiom appropriate to the development of Western man. She was not concerned with organizational activities as such, but simply with recording and gaining attention for the dynamics and the goal of human evolution, giving numerous illustrations of her meaning from the religions of the past and the science of her day.

She came as an individual, without herald and almost without friends. While enormously cosmopolitan, she had little formal education and attracted inquiry and support mainly by the intensity of her intelligence and her strange capacities as a rarely developed human being. Yet one could say that she was above all an educator, in the most profound meaning of this term, since everything she said and did had for its purpose the stimulation and enrichment of man's serious thought about himself, and the giving of Theosophic explanations of the mysteries with which each one of us is surrounded. She poured out her full heart in her books in a mighty effort to restore the primeval unity of man's daily activities with the spiritual purposes of his presence on earth, and she left no stone unturned in the attempt to supply evidence of the verity of what she taught. At great hazard to her own welfare in a skeptical, complacent, and momentarily prosperous world, she revealed the source of what she taught as being a fraternity of highly evolved men—Adepts, or Mahatmas—since no other course would have completed the logic of her teaching, and because, we may think, the time had come in the progress of mankind for this disclosure to be made, whatever the consequence to its revealer.

In these teachings lie the substances of philosophy that can fill the emptiness of the age and nourish the hungers of a mankind that now lashes about wildly, seeking in an impoverished politics and an economics disordered by technological miracles for meanings that are to be found only by rediscovery of the Promethean spirit in man. Whether, during the coming cycle, these profound and saving ideas will gain wide currency in the form that they have in *The Secret Doctrine,* or will appear, to some extent, in new vocabularies evolved by modern thought, can hardly be predicted at this time, but appear they will, since nothing less than these conceptions has the power to lift the minds of men to those deeper engagements of spiritual purpose that the age requires. And it is as certain that the work of Theosophists in obtaining fundamental mastery of the teachings of H.P.B. and in introducing them by whatever means possible into the currents of modern thought, is crucial to the future.

The stress in her writings, from 1875 to 1891, was forever the same. First, the potential divinity of all human beings; the pure, ennobling, and strengthening conception of the Higher Self, unsectarian, bodiless, and free, identical with the ultimate reality and deific essence in all. There follows the law of universal brotherhood, based upon the common origin of all souls, cemented by their common destiny. The impersonality of Deity, the universality of Law, and the teaching of evolutionary progress for all men and all life through unending re-embodiments and cycles of experience and growth, are practical keynotes. These ideas fused in the conception of Teachers who have in every age declared the same doctrines of spiritual self-reliance, of Karma and Reincarnation, are the essential message of Theosophy, brought by one whose purpose was to offer the world the vision of man as a being who is undying in essence, whose natural habitat is the world of mind and spirit.

The task, today, for those who accept H.P.B. as their Teacher, is to continue to generate a sense of reality for that vision, for only by this means can it be shared with others. What is wanted is a flow into the world, by the agency of devoted minds and hearts, of conviction, explanation, and exposition, of the teachings of H.P.B. The channels may be various, the opportunities changing in character, and the modes sometimes direct, sometimes indirect, but if these ideas have ever-renewed life in the minds of students, the openings for their spread will eventually appear.

CREMATION AND RESURRECTION

(Concluded)

IS it mere coincidence, do we think, that the same teaching concerning the vestures of Divine Incarnations, or Avatars, should prevail in all three of the world's foremost religions? Is it without reason that so much of the literature inherited from our early Christian predecessors should concern this strange, mystical question of the nature of Jesus' body? How many parishioners of the various churches have ever had this problem brought to their attention by their priests and preachers, or know anything at all about what Origen—sometimes called the greatest Christian authority after the apostles—had to say on the subject? In his voluminous replies to Celsus, Origen devotes several chapters to the nature of Jesus' form and flesh, and although a believer in *physicality* of a kind, upholds in some respects the teachings of the Buddhists and Brahmans. Origen said:

> But if the immortal God—the Word—by assuming a mortal body and a human soul, appears to Celsus to undergo a change and transformation, let him learn that the Word, still remaining essentially the Word, suffers none of those things which are suffered by the body or the soul; but condescending occasionally to (the weaknesses of) him who is unable to look upon the splendours and brilliancy of Deity, He becomes as it were flesh, speaking with a literal voice, until he who has received Him in such a form is able, through being elevated in some slight degree by the teaching of the Word, to gaze upon what is, so to speak, His real and pre-eminent appearance. . . .
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> Although Jesus was only a single individual, He was nevertheless more things than one, according to the different standpoints from which He might be regarded; nor was He seen in the same way by all who beheld Him . . . but according to their several ability to receive Him. . . . And I think that the Saviour Himself indicates the same thing by the words: "I was daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on Me." (Matt. 26: 55.)
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> For there are different appearances, as it were, of the Word, according as He shows Himself to each one of those who come

> to His doctrine; and this in a manner corresponding to the condition of him who is just becoming a disciple, or of him who has made a little progress, or of him who has advanced further, or of him who has already *nearly* attained to virtue, or who has even *already* attained it. . . . How did he [Celsus] not observe the changing relation of His body according to the capacity of the spectators (and therefore its corresponding utility), inasmuch as it appeared to each one of such a nature as it was requisite for him to behold it? (Origen Against Celsus, IV, 15-16; II, 64; VI, 77: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV.*)

In Volume V of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Hippolytus, in "The Refutation of all Heresies," speaks of two theories that were current in his day concerning the nature of Jesus' body—namely, the Italian and the Oriental. After explaining the former, he says:

> The Oriental, on the other hand, of whom Axionicus and Bardesianes, assert that the body of the Saviour is spiritual, for there came upon Mary the Holy Spirit. (*Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. V, page 89.)

The bodies of Perfected Beings, according to *The Secret Doctrine,* while shaped like ours, are composed of "radiant matter, strongly electrical and magnetic." Present-day students of Theosophy do not presume, of course, to be able to describe the nature of those bodies—but they ask their Christian brothers to consider whether this ancient tradition might not explain several hitherto unexplained incidents in the life of Jesus. Unless His body was composed of highly electrical and magnetic substance, radiating beyond the confines of the form, how explain, for example, the halo that is always shown surrounding Him? How else, unless His body was strongly magnetic and extending beyond His clothing, could He have said to the woman who came from behind and touched the border of His garment: "Who touched me?" (Mark 8: 44.) And unless His body was spiritual and divine, as the Gnostics taught, "with qualities peculiar to itself," how could it be that "as many as touched him were made whole"? (Mark 6: 56.) Also, if it was only an ordinary physical body that was resurrected at the sepulchre, why did Jesus feel it necessary to warn Mary Magdalene to "Touch me not"? (John 20: 17.) And how, finally, if his form was physical, could He have walked in through dense matter "when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews"? (John 20: 19-20.)

But some, in their effort to uphold the doctrine of bodily resur-

rection, argue that Jesus "shewed unto them [the disciples] his hands and his side," and allowed Thomas to place his finger in the wound. (John 20: 27.) Is this not proof, they say, that the body of Jesus was physical? The question of the "solidity" of Jesus' body, as well as that of the bodies of the angels, was discussed at length in early Christian days. And Tertullian said, at least with respect to the latter, that "there was solidity in their bodily substance, whatever may have been the force by which the body became visible." Tertullian continues:

> You have sometimes read and believed that the Creator's angels have been changed into human form, and have even borne about so veritable a body, that Abraham even washed their feet (Gen. 18: 1-4), and Lot was rescued from the Sodomites by their hands (Gen. 19: 15-16); an angel, moreover, wrestled with a man so strenuously with his body, that the latter desired to be let loose, so tightly was he held (Gen. 32: 24-30). ("On the Flesh of Christ," III, p. 523: *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Vol. III.)

It is the teaching of Theosophy that the astral body of man, although ordinarily invisible, is the real human form. Being electrical and magnetic in its nature, it is the model or matrix into which the physical atoms are drawn and arrange themselves. Under the Will of the Adept, or Mahatma, both this astral form and others of a more ethereal or spiritual nature can be made objective with ease, and thus exhibit all the characteristics of solidity. The apparent objectivity of Jesus' body, therefore, is no proof of its materiality, nor does its solidity militate in any way against the teaching of Marcion, Basilides and Valentinus that it was "spiritual" in substance.

If it is true, as H. P. Blavatsky says the Buddhists taught, that there are three classes of rebirth: (1) that of the Avatar, or Saviour, whose visible form is an illusory one; (2) that of the Adept or Nirmanakaya, who is reborn consciously and at will, and (3) that of the general run of mankind, ourselves, who are drawn unconsciously into rebirth under the law of evolution—then it would seem to follow that there are also three classes of death. If the birth of the Avatar is "outside and beyond the cycle of general rebirths," so also must his death be outside the general laws of death governing mankind as a whole. How, then, can Jesus' death and ascension continue to be looked upon as the standard for ordinary men, and

made the groundwork for the illogical doctrine of bodily resurrection?

The natural separation of the principles brought about by the death of ordinary mortals divides the total man into three parts: first, the visible body with all its elements left to disintegrate on the earth plane, in time resolved into the different physical departments of nature; second, the *kama rupa,* made up of the astral body and the passions and desires, which also begins at once to go to pieces on the astral plane; and third, the real man, the upper triad of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas,* which is deathless, and now out of earth conditions begins in *devachan* to function solely as mind clothed in an ethereal vesture that will last until the time comes for it to return to earth.

It is the opinion of the Theosophist that the Gnostic Christians were spiritualists, in the true sense of that term. Unlike the Sadduccees of that day, they had no such view as the resurrection of the physical body. Creeping materialism in their ranks was the blight that led to this illogical dogma, and to the rejection of Gnostic principles. And it is this same dark influence today that accounts for the present ineffectiveness of Christian teachings. The aim of the Theosophical Movement is to restore true spirituality to those religions that have lost it, to reawaken in man his spiritual intuitions, to reaffirm his status as a spiritual being—one with "God"—and to adjust all action in accordance with this same high view.[4] The cycles move onward and time swallows up all things, and customs once declared to be anathema have their way of being re-born, and thus of gaining favor in the eyes of even the most dogmatic.

An item in the New York *Times* of June 27, 1943, announced that the "Church of England endorses cremation," adding that the authorities wished it to be clearly understood, however, that this commitment "did not in any way affect the church's belief in the resurrection of the body." Dr. Von Ogden Vogt, a retired pastor of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago, embraced an even broader view. Writing in the *Christian Century* of March 21, 1945, he discussed the subject of funeral ritualism in general, and remarked that "without anyone's conscious decision about it, and without recognition of it, the popular funeral has become materialistic. It comes close to identifying the person with his body. If there is a definite belief in immortality, surely the funeral," he says, "is no place for weakness of expression." Dr. Vogt's suggestion is to "give consideration to cremation" as "the more civilized practice, increas-

ingly favored by thoughtful people."

The Theosophist is inclined to agree, but asks whether it is only the funeral rites of Christendom that have become materialistic. Has not the whole body of Christian dogma, with its outside personal God, its heaven of personal rewards and its unending hell for transgressors—and especially the tenet of bodily resurrection—suffered the same degrading fate? If any single feature of Christian doctrine is materialistic and "comes close," as Dr.Vogt thinks, "to identifying the person with his body," it certainly appears to be the doctrine of the *resurrection of the flesh*.

In the year 1886, ten years after the Theosophists had introduced cremation into the customs of this and other countries, severe canonical penalties for pursuit of the practice were imposed by the Roman Catholic Church, "in reaction," says the New York *Times* of June 6, 1964, "to aggressive 19th century anti-religious movements." These "anti-religious movements," the report goes on to say, "made cremation a symbol of positive rejection of belief in the Catholic doctrine of resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgment." But in 1964, Pope Paul reversed this position by approving new regulations ending these severe punishments on Catholics who choose cremation for themselves and others. Without approving cremation itself, or altering the church's preference for burial, the new document, sent to Catholic bishops by the Holy Office, states that those who choose cremation will no longer be proclaimed "public sinners" nor denied the sacraments. The *Times* account continues:

> The new instruction specified that the penalties would still apply in the case of anyone who requested cremation as a form of defiance to the belief in the immortality of the soul and resurrection of the body.
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> Church theologians now say that the cremation of a body would not prevent its resurrection at the command of an all-powerful divinity. It is acknowledged further that there are legitimate economic and hygienic reasons for cremation in some parts of the world where space for cemetery burial is limited.

Cremation, according to Theosophy, affects directly only the material body. It has no greater effect upon the Real Man, or Soul, who has left the body, than the burning of a worn-out suit of clothes would have upon a living man who had discarded it. Practiced by intelligent people for the sake of the living, not the dead, it is a health precaution which, through the use of fire, is just a clean, ra-

tional method of disposing of dead bodies, human or otherwise.

According to recent statistics released by The Cremation Association of America, there were 59,376 cremations performed in the United States in 1959. Last year, in 1964, the figure had risen to 67,658. Each succeeding year shows a steady increase. With prejudice dying away and land for cemeteries becoming more and more difficult to obtain, the indications are that the reform inaugurated by the Theosophists a century ago will continue to grow in popularity, and that health hazards sometimes incident to the use of graveyards will ultimately be removed.

Those who feel that the burning of the worn-out bodies of their loved ones is heartless may be interested in a conversation that took place a few years ago between Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and Madame Pandit, Indian Ambassador to the United States and sister of the late Prime Minister Nehru. Mrs. Roosevelt had remarked on her failure to understand Nehru's lack of fear of military attack. Madame Pandit suggested that one reason for this prevalent attitude might be that there is no fear of death in the average Hindu mind. She said:

> From the time you are a little child, the whole training is that life is a cycle—you are born, you grow up, you do your various duties, you die. You must die and be born again.
>
> And then, you know, we have this custom of cremation, which I think sounds rather terrible to Western minds. But when you see this—actually it is so beautiful, this vast expanse of the Ganges, the blue sky and the peace and the scattering of the ashes, the idea being that you mingle with the elements again. (*McCall's Magazine*, April, 1950.)

ANSWER TO A QUESTION

The death of the body means a return of the "Lives" of the body to their respective elements. In cremation this return is immediate. There is great benefit to the living in the restoration of the elements without their going through the slow process of decomposition. When considered from every point of view, cremation is beneficial. There is a psychological effect from it, too, on those who are left behind; for as soon as cremation is completed the bereaved at once feel that release.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

YOUTH FORUM

Theosophical ideas often seem more useful to adults than to younger people. For example, the concept of absolute divine Self may be appropriate to the person searching for philosophical principles, but it has little meaning for the person whose body, emotions, and intellect are changing so rapidly that his experiences are a source of wonder, confusion, excitement, and anxiety. How may Theosophy be made meaningful for the adolescent?

Everyone has seen a child at play in a dirt pile. The roads carved with tiny hands are as real to the child as our grandest freeways; and the toy cars that move by finger-power over those dusty roads have as much speed as any of our super-horsed chariots. Certainly that enchanted moment will pass and be replaced by more mature deliberations—or, not necessarily more "mature," but certainly *other* concerns. Thus the adolescent is involved with the growth and change of a body that daily has inexplicable sensations, a mind that continually thinks new thoughts, and emotions that are erratic and unpredictable. Eventually, as the possibilities of adolescence slowly become known, the feelings and thoughts of older years replace these earlier impulses.

How are philosophical considerations made appropriate for the adolescent? They aren't, if considered in terms of tenets. Perhaps it is presumptuous for us to think that we know enough about another person's physical and mental metabolism to hasten its hospitality to philosophy. Somehow, parents and teachers get the idea that they must teach their children certain "truths"—as if education were a matter of persuasion, memorization, or conversion. As a result, we may have children who can tell us what Karma "is," yet know little of the meaning of their exposition; we may have a high school student who comes to Theosophy school thinking that the Universal Philosophy may be pertinent to understand all life except his own. Here, the *Gita* may be taken as a model. Krishna speaks always to Arjuna's condition, as reflected in his questions and complaints. Although it is true that "Theosophy is for those

who want it," too often the impulse is to help another person to want Theosophy just a little more.

A recent article by John Holt in *Manas* speaks to this point. Mr. Holt talks about the education of children, but his comments are appropriate to all ages:

> We adults destroy most of the intellectual and creative capacity of children by the things we do to them or make them do. We destroy this capacity above all by making them afraid, afraid of not doing what other people want, of not pleasing, of making mistakes, of failing, of being wrong. Thus we make them afraid to gamble, afraid to experiment, afraid to try the difficult and the unknown. . . .
>
> In many ways, we break down children's conviction that things make sense, or their hope that things may prove to make sense. We do it, first of all, by breaking up life into arbitrary and disconnected hunks of subject matter, which we then try to "integrate" by artificial and irrelevant devices. . . . Furthermore, we continually confront them with what is senseless, ambiguous, and contradictory; worse, we do it without knowing that we are doing it, so that, hearing nonsense shoved at them as if it were sense, they come to feel that the source of their confusion lies not in the material but in their own stupidity. Still further, we cut children off from their own common sense and the world of reality by requiring them to play with and shove around words and symbols that have little or no meaning to them. . . .

Returning to the comments which opened this discussion, we can say that there are no guarantees that Theosophical ideas will make sense, let alone seem important, to everyone. The idea of an "absolute divine Self" is meaningless to one whose sense of "self" lies in the image he sees in the mirror; yet there are intermediate aspects of self-hood between that and the broad, philosophical concept of Self in its most abstruse form. For the individual, the first awakenings toward a reflection on the Divine Self may come as awareness that he *has* a body and personal feelings. If this is the person's perception of reality, then the idiom for talking about that personal self would be concerned with the body and feelings. This is as good a place as any to begin a consideration of the possibilities of one's Self. The important thing is to start the dialogue. Then the soul may slowly come to see that his sense of identity presently resides in projected images of himself—affected by the people he likes or dislikes, these images constructing the person he believes he is. The problem is to be able to continually discard limiting conceptions of

Self and to extend the radius of one's being. William James long ago set the problem in familiar terms:

> Not that I would not, if I could, be handsome and fat and well dressed, and a great athlete, and make a million a year, be a wit, a *bon vivant*, and a lady-killer, as well as a philosopher, a philanthropist, a statesman, a warrior, and African explorer, as well as a "tone-poet" and a saint. The thing is simply impossible. The millionaire's work would run counter to the saint's; the *bon vivant* and the philanthropist would trip each other up; the philosopher and the lady-killer could not well keep house in the same tenement of clay.

It may be difficult to accept that the complete Theosophical frame of reference is often "more useful to adults than to younger people." But have we forgotten the youthful sense of freedom in *not* being committed to anything or in wandering through a labyrinth of sensations and emotions on the one hand, and through numerous psychologies and philosophies on the other? Have we forgotten the obscure routes that have brought many to Theosophy? In one sense, a person may be driven to Theosophy by the failure of all other forms of thought and action. After having been an agnostic or atheist, skeptic or stoic—or identified with any of the positions one may take in life—then it is possible to get some perspective on the breadth and depth of Theosophical thought. H. P. Blavatsky said of *The Secret Doctrine* that she could "give but what she has herself been taught, and no more." "But even this," she added, "will appear to the profane reader rather as a weird, fantastic dream, than as a possible reality. This is only natural and as it should be, since for years such was the impression made upon the humble writer of these pages herself." How much more unlikely will Theosophy seem to one who is not yet concerned with impersonal philosophical principles? The bridge to minds involved in intensities of life, growth and action may well be in applications of the principles of action—such as Karma and Reincarnation. Awakening to the ineffable reality of the One Self is the task of many lifetimes.

MAYA, OR ILLUSION

THE Universe is called, with everything in it, MAYA, because all is temporary therein, from the ephemeral life of a fire-fly to that of the Sun. Compared to the eternal immutability of the ONE, and the changelessness of that Principle, the Universe, with its evanescent ever-changing forms, must be necessarily, in the mind of a philosopher, no better than a will-o'-the-wisp. Yet, the Universe is real enough to the conscious beings in it, which are as unreal as it is itself.

It must not be forgotten . . . that we give names to things according to the appearances they assume for ourselves. The characteristics of matter [for example], must clearly bear a direct relation always to the senses of man. Matter has extension, colour, motion (molecular motion), taste, and smell, corresponding to the existing senses of man, and by the time that it fully develops the next characteristic—let us call it for the moment PERMEABILITY—this will correspond to the next sense of man—let us call it "NORMAL CLAIRVOYANCE." Matter, after all, is nothing else than the sequence of our own states of consciousness, and Spirit an idea of psychic intuition.

Everything is "relative" in this Universe, everything is an illusion. Good and Evil are twins, the progeny of Space and Time, under the sway of MAYA. Separate them, by cutting off one from the other, and they will both die. Neither exists *per se*, since each has to be generated and created out of the other, in order to come into being; both must be known and appreciated before becoming objects of perception, hence, in mortal mind, they must be divided. Perfection, to be fully such, must be born out of imperfection, the *incorruptible* must grow out of the corruptible, having the latter as its vehicle and basis of contrast.

Absolute light is absolute darkness, and *vice versa*. In fact, there is neither light nor darkness in the realms of truth. Nothing is added to darkness to make it light, or to light to make it darkness, on this our plane. They are interchangeable, and scientifically light is but

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NOTE.—A student's collation from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky.

a mode of darkness and *vice versa*. Yet both are phenomena of the same noumenon—which is absolute darkness to the scientific mind, and but a gray twilight to the perception of the average mystic, though to that of the spiritual eye of the Initiate it is absolute light. How far we discern the light that shines in darkness depends upon our powers of vision. What is light to us is darkness to certain insects, and the eye of the clairvoyant sees illumination where the normal eye perceives only blackness. The sensation [one has] of light is like the sound . . . the noise produced by the rolling of the wheels of a vehicle—a purely phenomenal effect, having no existence outside the observer. The experience of any plane is an actuality for the percipient being, whose consciousness is on that plane; though the said experience, regarded from the purely metaphysical standpoint, may be conceived to have no objective reality.

It may serve to elucidate the meaning if we . . . imagine two consecutive planes of matter as already formed; each of these corresponding to an appropriate set of perceptive organs. We are forced to admit that between these two planes of matter an incessant circulation takes place; and if we follow the atoms and molecules of (say) the lower in their transformation upwards, these will come to a point where they pass altogether beyond the range of the faculties we are using on the lower plane. In fact, to us the matter on the lower plane vanishes from our perception into nothing—or rather it passes on to the higher plane.

When, therefore, the Secret Doctrine—postulating that conditioned or limited space (location) has no real being except in this world of illusion, or, in other words, in our perceptive faculties—teaches that every one of the higher, as of the lower worlds, is interblended with our own objective world; that millions of things and beings are, in point of localization, around and *in* us, as we are around, with, and in them; it is no metaphysical figure of speech, but a sober fact in Nature, however incomprehensible to our senses.

But one has to understand the phraseology of Occultism before criticizing what it asserts. For example, the Doctrine refuses (as Science does, in one sense) to use the words "above" and "below," "higher" and "lower," in reference to *invisible* spheres, as being without meaning. Even the terms "East" and "West" are merely conventional, necessary only to aid our human perceptions. For, though the Earth has its two fixed points in the poles, North and South, yet both East and West are variable relatively to our own

position on the Earth's surface, and in consequence of its rotation from West to East. Hence, when "*other* worlds" are mentioned—whether better or worse, more spiritual or still more material, though both invisible—the Occultist does not locate *these spheres* either *outside* or *inside* our Earth, as the theologians and poets do; for their location is nowhere in the space *known* to, and conceived by, the profane. They are, as it were, blended with our world—interpenetrating it and interpenetrated by it. There are millions and millions of worlds and firmaments visible to us; there are still greater numbers beyond those visible to the telescopes, and many of the latter kind do not belong to our *objective* sphere of existence. Although as invisible as if they were millions of miles beyond our solar system, they are yet with us, near us, *within* our own world, as objective and material to their respective inhabitants as ours is to us. But, again, the relation of these worlds to ours is not that of a series of egg-shaped boxes enclosed one within the other, like the toys called Chinese nests; each is entirely under its own special laws and conditions, having no direct relation to our sphere. The inhabitants of these, as already said, may be, for all we know, or feel, passing *through* and *around* us as if through empty space, their very habitations and countries being interblended with ours, though not disturbing our vision, because we have not yet the faculties necessary for discerning them. Yet by their spiritual sight the Adepts, and even some seers and sensitives, are always able to discern, whether in greater or smaller degree, the presence and close proximity to us of Beings pertaining to other spheres of life. Those of the (spiritually) higher worlds, communicate only with those terrestrial mortals who ascend to them, through individual effort, on to the higher plane they are occupying.

Polarity is universal, but the polarizer lies in our own consciousness. The sun is one, but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely.

What is Time, for instance, but the panoramic succession of our states of consciousness? Our ideas on duration and time are all derived from our sensations according to the laws of Association. Inextricably bound up with the relativity of human knowledge, they nevertheless can have no existence except in the experience of the

individual ego, and perish when its evolutionary march dispels the Maya of phenomenal existence. In the words of a Master, "I feel irritated at having to use these three clumsy words—Past, Present, and Future—miserable concepts of the objective phases of the subjective whole, they are about as ill-adapted for the purpose as an axe for fine carving."

Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but "lies asleep." The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past. Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change—or the same—for the billionth part of a second; and the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of "time" known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past. In the same way we experience a sensation of duration in the case of the instantaneous electric spark, by reason of the blurred and continuing impression on the retina. The real person or thing does not consist solely of what is seen at any particular moment, but is composed of the sum of all its various and changing conditions from its appearance in the material form to its disappearance from the earth. It is these "sum-totals" that exist from eternity in the "future," and pass by degrees through matter, to exist for eternity in the "past." No one could say that a bar of metal dropped into the sea came into existence as it left the air, and ceased to exist as it entered the water, and that the bar itself consisted only of that cross-section thereof which at any given moment coincided with the mathematical plane that separates and, at the same time, joins, the atmosphere and the ocean. Even so of persons and things, which, dropping out of the to-be into the has-been, out of the future into the past—present momentarily to our senses a cross-section, as it were, of their total selves, as they pass through time and space (as matter) on their way from one eternity to another: and these two constitute that "duration" in which alone anything has true existence, were our senses but able to cognize it there.

Maya or illusion [then] is an element which enters into all finite things, for everything that exists has only a relative, not an absolute,

reality, since the appearance which the hidden noumenon assumes for any observer depends upon his power of cognition. To the untrained eye of the savage, a painting is at first an unmeaning confusion of streaks and daubs of color, while an educated eye sees instantly a face or a landscape. Nothing is permanent except the one hidden absolute existence which contains in itself the noumena of all realities. The existences belonging to every plane of being, up to the highest Dhyan Chohans, are, in degree, of the nature of shadows cast by a magic lantern on a colourless screen; but all things are relatively real, for the cognizer is also a reflection, and the things cognized are therefore as real to him as himself. Whatever reality things possess must be looked for in them before or after they have passed like a flash through the material world; but we cannot cognise any such existence directly, so long as we have sense-instruments which bring only material existence into the field of our consciousness. Whatever plane our consciousness may be acting in, both we and the things belonging to that plane are, for the time being, our only realities. As we rise in the scale of development we perceive that during the stages through which we have passed we mistook shadows for realities, and the upward progress of the Ego is a series of progressive awakenings, each advance bringing with it the idea that now, at last, we have reached "reality"; but only when we shall have reached the absolute Consciousness, and blended our own with it, shall we be free from the delusions produced by Maya.

THE PERPLEXING GODDESS

Mahamaya, the Goddess, personifies the World Illusion, within the bounds and thralldom of which exist all forms whatsoever, whether gross or subtle, earthly or angelic, even those of the highest gods. She is the primary embodiment of the transcendent principle, and as such the mother of all names and forms, who deludes the world with Her illusion and conjures up the magic of creation, preservation, and destruction. She has spread this veil of ignorance before our eyes. We can go into the inner chamber only when she lets us pass through the door.

—HEINRICH ZIMMER

THE PLAY OF THE GODS

It is a contest of smiles, if we really know our business.
—W. Q. JUDGE

If everything goes smash, we shall be there to view the remains. Nothing is as bad as we think it is, or ever will be.
—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE absurdity of a spiritual being permitting himself to become downcast under stress of difficult personal circumstances is philosophically apparent to every thinker. Never does the absurdity become so evident as when circumstances, already as bad as they can be seemingly, take a turn for the worse! The situation, in its utterly impossible developments, actually borders upon the ridiculous, and the sufferer is forced to laugh, despite the prospect. Thereupon the sting is extracted—from disappointment, sickness, pain, disgrace, ruin, starvation, death, what not! They just cannot dominate or defeat the Purusha, the spiritual person, when they crowd too hard and too fast; by their power to stun the personality, they afford the Ego a clear-seeing moment.

In every human being there is a pure foundation, an immovable rock, an unshakable permanency, a calm, unbreakable, imperturbable, inmost finality. It is Himself. Storms of inconceivable fury may rage around it, sweeping to destruction all environments inner and outer, destroying all depending functions in the nature, annihilating everything that to the person appears to make life worth while. None can shake down this citadel. It is the Man, viewing all this outer sound and fury—always with concern for others who may be involved, but so far as his own works are affected, witnessing their tornadic departure with calm and whimsical eye. The bitterest storm loses its compelling quality when it bestirs a sense of humour.

All beings who have gone through Hell and emerged Theosophists, know this by experience. Many others sense its verity by observation. Their turn for the actual transit will inevitably arrive.

NOTE.—This article has been adapted and submitted from material which appeared in THEOSOPHY for February, 1929.

Meantime they can get into training, as an athlete conditions himself against a contest that lies ahead. He does not *fear* the race, but he gets ready for it. Practice starts are made; preliminary tests, trials and work-outs devotedly carried through. He is in training all the time, gains daily in strength, stamina and heart, until upon the arrival of the event he is primed and ready. So too can the student-theosophist prepare himself steadily, sturdily, and fearlessly against the time when power will be needed, and pretence will go for nothing.

His practice-starts, work-outs, preliminary tests and trials, will discover no necessity for halls of initiation, caves, ceremonials, nor any of the paraphernalia, regalia or other camouflage of the pseudo-occultist. (They may be found aplenty in the everyday course of life.) Can he take the ups and downs with equanimity? Can he smile over them—not artificially, but with a genuine appreciation of the malicious ingenuity of inanimate objects, and animate ones too, to set his plans and intentions awry, and turn him from his wonted purposes? Working life, student life, family life—especially family life—supply a thousand and one hurdles for our "athlete" to clear with smiling leap, with exulting gratitude for the temporary obstacle and his strength to overcome it. Body itself provides a wonderful training-field with its disabilities, aches, needs, demands, and its disconcerting surprises. A wracked body is sometimes even amusing, in that its bewhelmed owner may whimsically enquire what it is going to "have" next!

One can learn the presence of the citadel within himself. One can gradually transfer his residence thither as abiding-place, adjourning as needs arise to body and other departments of the personal nature, but knowing them for what they are: no more than casual tenements in and through which experience may be had. All of them are inhabited by circumstances, to deal with which, as a spiritual being, is the interesting and often exciting task in hand.

Living in the citadel—its own spot—the Soul goes forth, does its work, and returns. So cycling, the unwavering quality and undreamt potentialities of the Soul flow in some measure to all efforts, clarifying the personal perception, stabilizing the mind and will, accustoming the tools of the human instrument to the play of higher forces than those that ordinarily play therein, and producing effects upon the work in hand.

on the lookout

The Agnostic—and Natural Mysticism

The scientific or agnostic stance does not block perceptions regarding the occult side of nature, such as appeared, for instance, in Erwin Schroedinger's *What Is Life?* Even the writings of Marxists and economic determinists occasionally have passages which reflect the authors' intuitive awareness of man's spiritual responsibility to all life and all beings. A section of Scott Nearing's latest book (*The Conscience of a Radical*), bearing the title "We Humans Are Trustees," illustrates this point. Here Mr. Nearing shows that he is much more than an economist and political "realist." He writes:

> We humans are living, conscious, aspiring, creative beings having varied faculties with which we can conceive, plan, construct, organize and change ourselves and our natural and social surroundings.
>
> Having gained power and established ascendancy over other lives, mankind has become responsible for the earth and its future. At the point in history when human ascendancy was effectively established, it became man's duty to use the earth, its materials and its energies for the well-being of all its inhabitants. In a word, man, with his power of life and death over his fellow beings, became a trustee, in duty bound to administer his trust.

"Towards All Life and All Beings"

Mr. Nearing continues:

> Man became trustee for the well-being of himself and those lives, human and sub-human, directly dependent upon him.
>
> Man became a trustee for the successive waves of humanity born on the planet.
>
> Man became trustee for the earth, its resources, and their efficient use and conservation.
>
> Man became trustee for the multitudinous forms of life with which he was in contact on the earth.
>
> Man also became trustee for the planet earth as an integral part of the solar system and of the expanding universe.
>
> As a member of the human race, I must join with my fellows

in carrying out our human trusteeship. Failure to do my utmost in performing this task should hurt my conscience. That is what my conscience is for: to point the way I should go and warn when I leave the path of duty and responsibility.

The earth, the solar system, the universe wait, perhaps impatiently, for humanity's contribution to the life stream. . . . The time has come for mankind to make a concerted attempt to understand the mechanism of the universe, to contribute creatively to its functions and to guess at its purposes.

Man's Literal Dependence on Seeds

Joseph Wood Krutch, writing as agnostic Humanist in his column, "If You Don't Mind My Saying So" (*American Scholar,* Summer, 1965), discusses "Seeds and Civilization." He finds it "intriguing" that the very sciences that reject a teleological explanation of natural phenomena "have been compelled to reveal correspondences between the needs of human beings and the conditions of our physical world." Mr. Krutch begins:

The seed is, of course, a rather recent invention, as recent goes in the time scale of the earth. Plants reproduced without seed for a much longer time than has passed since seeds were invented and seed-bearing plants did not become dominant until a mere sixty or seventy million years ago. Yet . . . if seeds had not been invented in what might be called the nick of time, civilization could never have developed. . . .

Anthropologists still use the old terms Paleolithic and Neolithic to distinguish between the men who came before and those who came after a sudden leap forward. But they now know that it was not polished stone weapons that made the difference. Men were able to make better implements because they had invented agriculture. Thus the seed of our civilization was literally a seed. And before man could discover how to use the seed, Nature had first to invent it. And it took Nature herself millions of years to invent step-by-step this wonderful device. The plant kingdom could get along very well without seeds but human civilization would be impossible.

The Wonder of the Seed

Mr. Krutch's choice of words leads one to assume that he is less inclined to Darwin's mechanistic theory of evolution than to Lamarck's idea that organisms evolve in certain directions because they *will* to do so. Plants could have gone on forever reproducing themselves from spores, as ferns still do. Yet many plants learned to produce seeds. How?

Essentially, and enormously simplified, what happened was

this: Spores, like those of the fern, became pollen and the plant "got into the habit" of going through an abbreviated form of the thallus stage of the fern on the parent plant itself and it thus created a seed with an embryo.

A seed is a wonderfully convenient device. It is a kind of egg that differs from the ordinary animal egg in one important particular. It is an egg that starts to hatch, then arrests the process and enters upon a dormant period in which it may remain alive but unchanging for many years or even—in at least one known case—for centuries. The advantages of this arrangement for man as well as for the plant are obvious. And the most obvious of all is the fact that a seed, unlike an egg, can be kept until a convenient or suitable time has come for it to make itself into a plant again.

Whence the Idea of Seeds?

Mr. Krutch's explanation of how plants developed seeds and his discussion of their importance in human evolution raise the questions: Why did spore plants "will" to evolve into seed-bearing plants? Where did the idea of seeds come from? H.P.B.'s remark (*S.D.* II, 289-90) leads to some reflections on these questions. She says: "Man was the store-house, so to speak, of *all the seeds of life* for this Round, vegetable and animal alike." And in a footnote on page 290, she elaborates:

It may be objected that this is a contradiction. That, as the first Root-Race appeared 300,000,000 years after the vegetation had evolved, the seed of vegetable life could not be in the First Race. We say it could; for up to man's appearance in *this* Round, the vegetation was of quite another kind than it is now, and quite ethereal, this for the simple reason that no grass or plants could have been physical before there were animal or other organisms to breathe out the carbonic acid which vegetation has to imbibe for its development, its nutrition and growth. They are interdependent in their *physical* and achieved forms.

Admittedly, this offers no easy answer to our questions, for man was certainly not the storehouse of "physical" seeds, but the bearer of residual causes, latent until the time is right for them (itself a seed-like process), and recognition of the interdependence of man and Nature affords a basis for drawing analogies along these lines.

Scientific Ecological Observations

Dr. Luther Terry, U.S. Surgeon General, observes that peculiar results such as these illustrate "the interdependence and interrelationship of all facets of environmental health, as well as the intimacy

of its association with every aspect of natural resource management." (New York *Times,* April 2, 1965.) Dr. Terry comments on the mysterious death of millions of fish in the Mississippi River basin during the last four years. Eventually the killer was identified as "infinitesimal traces of chemical pesticides draining from farmlands throughout the watershed." Considering that "there now is nearly six times as much pollution in our rivers, streams and lakes as sixty years ago and the amount is still increasing," the complexity of the problem is ominous.

Another *Times* article (July 10, 1965) tells how Louisiana water-pollution control officials reported "five different fish kills—ranging from 3,500 to 8,000 fish each—in bayous and canals in south-western Louisiana from June 29 to July 7." The control officials had not positively identified the reason for the fish deaths, but suspected "that they were caused by the pesticide endrin applied to the sugar cane fields in the Louisiana Delta region."

Perspective on "Solution"

To the farmer whose crop depends on effective insecticides, the problem of "natural resource management" is one of eliminating insect pests; and since many chemicals generate increasing immunity in the intended victims, the food-raisers respond with demands for more potent poisons. Health authorities, on the other hand, recognize the increasing dangers of toxic residues and therefore demand tighter control of insecticides. Both realize that either solution is only partial.

The cause-effect relationships which produce ecological imbalances are so complex, so involved with forces set in motion decades ago, that alternative solutions are not apparent. At such a time (when metaphysical and psychological study appears to be "secondary" to any solution that may be offered), the student of Theosophy might well ask what applications of first principles will be the Ariadne's thread leading out of this maze of chemistry, biology, and "natural resource management." Metaphysical study is useful in developing caution when disturbing the veiled metabolism of animal and plant ecology, yet ecological adjustment seems to depend on an understanding of organic rather than philosophical laws.

Humanistic Ecology

In his latest book, also bearing the title *If You Don't Mind My Saying So,* Mr. Krutch speaks of another aspect of man's relation-

ship with nature—this time emphasizing the "spiritual" and æsthetic lift that nature provides:

> We have heard much about "our natural resources" and of the necessity for conserving them, but these "resources" are not only materially useful. They are also a great reservoir of the life from which we evolved, and they have both consolation to offer and lessons to teach which are not alone those the biologist strives to learn. In their presence many of us experience a lifting of the heart for which mere fresh air and sunshine is not sufficient to account. We feel surging up in us the exuberant, vital urge which has kept evolution going but which tends to falter amid the complexities of a too civilized life. In our rise to the human state we have lost something, despite all we have gained.
>
> Is it merely a sentimental delusion, a "pathetic fallacy," to think that one sees in the animal a capacity for joy which man himself is tending to lose? We have invented exercise, recreation, pleasure, amusement, and the rest. To "have fun" is a desire often expressed by those who live in this age of anxiety and most of us have at times actually "had fun." But recreation, pleasure, amusement, fun, and all the rest are poor substitutes, for joy, I am convinced, has its roots in something from which civilization tends to cut us off.
>
> Those who have never found either joy or solace in nature might begin by looking not for the *joy they can get,* but for the *joy that is there* amid those portions of the earth man has not yet entirely pre-empted for his own use. And perhaps when they have become aware of joy in other creatures they will achieve joy themselves, by sharing it.

Periodical Literature of Theosophy

In view of the theme of this month's editorial article, it may be well to take some notice, here, of the availability to students of the writings of H.P.B. other than her major works, *Isis Unveiled, The Secret Doctrine,* and the later books. As most students are well aware, even before the founding of the Theosophical Society in 1875, Madame Blavatsky had begun to give hints of the purposes and direction of the lifework that lay before her. These came in the form of letters to the press and material which appeared in the Spiritualist journals of those days. It was not until the end of 1879 that she obtained, in the *Theosophist* published in India, a magazine of her own in which she could give unfettered expression to Theosophical ideas. From that time on, however, there was an almost constant flow of articles and miscellaneous commentary from her pen. She wrote continuously for more than eleven years—until

her death in 1891—expounding, criticizing, annotating, adding month after month to the content and dimensions of the periodical literature of Theosophy. Others helped in this, of course, notably William Q. Judge, who started the *Path* magazine in the United States in 1886, so that by the end of the century a large and vitally important supplement to the basic texts of the Theosophical philosophy lay in the pages of the back numbers of the Theosophical journals, which had become several as the work of the Movement spread. Periodicals supply the life-blood of a movement which takes its primary inspiration from ideas, and magazine articles often provide a unique stimulus to further inquiry.

Reprint Policy

The value of this material to students being self-evident, the publishers of THEOSOPHY adopted the policy of reprinting the articles of H.P.B. and Judge, starting with the first issue in November, 1912. This practice was continued without break for fifty years. During the course of this half-century, very nearly all the important articles of the chief founders were given repeated currency, some of them appearing three or even four times. In 1962, a change in the plan of reprinting was inaugurated by the editors. Both the scarcity and the cost of complete sets of the bound volumes of THEOSOPHY pointed to the need of making the periodical literature available in another form, and supplementary pamphlets, each containing several H.P.B. articles, began to be issued in connection with the magazine. These articles are loosely grouped according to some conception of related content, providing students with concentrated material ranging over some broad area of the philosophy. An important use of these pamphlets is as texts in the study classes. While some years will have passed before the bulk of the original periodical literature of both H.P.B. and Judge is available in this form, the convenience of the pamphlet format for both study and promulgation seems evident, and as the number of pamphlets grows they may be made into volumes by being bound together, since they are of a uniform size. Quite conceivably, the entire body of articles may eventually be reproduced by photographic process in volume form, similar to the hand-bound volumes of groups of articles, suggested above, thus supplying handy collections of more or less related articles in each book. The value to serious students of this long-term publishing program seems unmistakable.

"Complete Works"

Meanwhile, this is an appropriate time to take note of a series begun in 1933, *The Complete Works of H. P. Blavatsky,* now in its tenth volume, which has thus far put into print, in chronological order, the periodical writings of H.P.B. from 1874 through 1889. The compiler of this extensive undertaking is Boris de Zirkoff, an independent student of H.P.B., although this did not become evident from the published works until 1950, with appearance of the fifth volume. Various publishers, starting with Rider & Co. in London, have issued the volumes of this collection, the present publisher being the Theosophical Publishing House at Adyar, Madras, India. Throughout, however, the compiler has been the same. (Vols. 5 and 6 may be obtained from Mr. de Zirkoff, at 551 South Oxford St., Los Angeles, Calif. 90005, $5.00 each; and Vols. 7-10 incl., from The Theosophical Press, P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, Ill., $6.50 each.)

Some conception of the scope of these volumes is given by the jacket announcement accompanying Vol. X: "The entire material contained in the present series of volumes is arranged in strictly chronological order, showing the gradual unfoldment of H.P.B.'s mission from 1874, and the progressive development in the presentation of the teachings, from her encounter with the Spiritualists of America, to the end of her career in 1891."

Back to Blavatsky

The unique value of this series lies in the opportunity it affords to the reader to grasp the double impact of the Theosophical Movement—its challenge to the world of the nineteenth century, and the repercussions generated in that world and returned to the founders by various means, as a result of the enlightening, disturbing, and even revolutionary disclosures which Madame Blavatsky put into print. The living skein of the movement as a crucial historical phenomenon may be felt by the reader, who begins to gain insight into the burdens so willingly shouldered by the teacher, H.P.B., and at a cost to herself which only years of reading and reflection by the student can make plain. A careful and comprehensive Compiler's Preface accompanies all the volumes, acquainting the reader with the decisions anyone doing such editorial work is obliged to make, and stating the policies of scholarship that have been adopted throughout. This Preface also includes a discussion of certain mysteries which attach to the writings of H.P.B., with explanations cited

from H.P.B. and her Teachers. The acknowledgements are an impressive testament to the regard in which H.P.B. is held throughout the Theosophical world, now increasing after serious neglect in certain quarters, and the series as a whole cannot help but spread more widely an understanding of what she attempted among Theosophists and, more gradually, in the world at large.

Scholarly Achievement

The compiler, Mr. de Zirkoff, has tried in many ways to anticipate questions that may arise in the minds of readers, and to give such help as is possible in such connections. He has made a valiant effort to verify all quotations and appends notes in cases where this has not proved possible. In some instances material never before appearing in English has been translated by the compiler from a foreign language. When the contribution of H.P.B. is mainly in footnotes to an article of another authorship, the general sense of the matter to which her comment applies is supplied in the form of brief supplementary text by the compiler. In general, then, this work of devotion to the Teacher and Chief Founder of the Theosophical Movement, already some thirty years in process, is an incomparably useful addition to the body of available sources of Theosophical teaching, and will be particularly valuable to those who wish to increase their mastery of Theosophical history and gain a more comprehensive view of the complex and many-sided labors of H.P.B.